THE PROTECTION OF

TAWHID

Making Worship Pure For Allah

And

The Acts That Nullify One's Faith

Five Essays by:

Sheikh ‘Abdul ‘Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz

١٤٣٥ هـ

حراسة التوحيد

للإمام

عبد العزيز بن عبد الله بن باز

رحمه الله

باللغة الإنجليزية

وكالة المطبوعات والبحث العلمي
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In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficient, the Most Merciful

INTRODUCTION

As we know, the concept of the Oneness of Allah formed the basis of the mission of our beloved Prophet, Muhammad bin Abdullah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and this noble mission is in fact a continuation of the missions of the Prophets who preceded him, as stated by Allah in the Noble Qur'an:

All praise is due to Allah and may peace and blessings be upon the Prophet of Allah, on his family members and on all those who proceed on his path.

> "And verily, We have sent among every *Ummah* (community, nation) a messenger (proclaiming): 'worship Allah (alone), and avoid (or keep away from) *Taghut* (all false deities etc.).'" (16:36)

Since opposition to heresy and falsehood, in its various manifestations, formed the core of this Faith, it is a duty on every Muslim to be well informed about his/her religion, and to worship Allah as ordained by the Islamic *Shari'ah*. The Muslims of previous generations had a clear concept regarding their religion because all their beliefs, actions and dealings were in accordance with the Noble Qur'an and the pure traditions (*Sunnah* = words and deeds of the Prophet (pbuh)). With the passing of time, many Muslims deviated from this straight path - the path of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* - and fell apart into factions and groups. These factions differed in all matters pertaining to religion as well as politics and the laws that govern daily life. As a result, many societies fell prey to heretical innovations, falsehoods, magic and witchcraft. In turn, these ills served as easy loopholes for the enemies of Islam to attack Islam and its followers.

The '*Ulama*' (learned scholars) of Islam have, in all periods of history, past and present, cautioned us through their writings against these innovations. This booklet entitled: "Tawhid: The Essence of Islam" consists of five essays by Sheikh 'Abdul 'Aziz Bin 'Abdullah Bin Baz.

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The Presidency of the Directorates of Islamic Research is pleased to present this booklet as a contribution towards the enlightenment of the Muslim community against heresy and superstition. We hope that this may aid in increasing the general appreciation and understanding of Islam. May Allah the Almighty make this booklet a useful tool for all Muslims; verily, Allah alone grants success. And may peace be upon Muhammad (pbuh), his family and his companions.

(Note: (pbuh) = 'peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.' This is used as a form of respect after the mention of the name of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).)

❖ THE TRUE DOCTRINE AND WHAT OPPOSES IT

All praise is due to Allah, and may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon His final messenger, his pure family, his noble companions, and all those who follow them with righteousness until the Day of Judgment. To proceed:

In view of the fact that the true *aqidah* (doctrine, ideology, article of faith) is the foundation of Islam, I have decided on *'The True Doctrine and What Opposes it'* as the title for this treatise. It is clear, from proof in the Qur'an and *sunnah*, that a person's deeds will not be accepted unless they emanate from a true doctrine. If the doctrine is not authentic, all words and deeds stemming from it are bound to be rejected. The verses indicating this fact are numerous in the Noble Qur'an; for example:

> "And whosoever disbelieves in Faith, then fruitless will be his work; and in the hereafter he will be among the loser." (5:5)
>
> "And indeed, it has already been revealed to you, as it was to those before you, that if you join others with Allah in worship, then surely all your deeds will be in vain, and you will certainly be among the losers." (39:65)

The True Doctrine is presented clearly for us in the Qur'an and in the Prophetic traditions (*ahadith)*. The doctrine consists of six articles, namely, to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and *Al-Qadar* (Divine destiny), the good and the bad of it. These six articles of faith constitute the basis of the true ideology with which Allah sent His Book and His messenger, Muhammad (pbuh). These articles also include all aspects of *al-ghaib* (the unseen world) in which a Muslim should believe, as well as all that Allah and His messenger have informed us thereof. The evidence for this ideology is contained in many verses in the Noble Qur'an as well as Prophetic traditions. The following are but a few examples.

> "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the east or west, rather it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the angels, the Book and the messengers." (2:177)
>
> "The messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from His Lord, and (so have) the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels, and His books, and His messengers, (saying), 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers.' And they say, 'We hear and we obey, (we

> seek) your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the (final) destination.'" (2:285)
>
> "O you who believe! Believe in Allah and His messenger, and the scripture which He has sent down upon His messenger and the scripture He sent down before. And whoever disbelieves in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day, has certainly gone astray." (4:136)
>
> "Do you not know that Allah knows what it in the heavens and earth? Indeed, it is (all) in a record (*al-lawh al-mahfuth*). Verily, that is easy for Allah." (22:70)

The authentic Prophetic traditions clearly supporting these articles are also innumerable. Following is an example of one such tradition. Muslim reported in his *Sahih* on the authority of 'Umar bin Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) that when Jibril (peace be upon him) asked the Prophet (pbuh) about faith, he said:

> "*Iman* (faith) is to believe in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day, and to believe in destiny, the good and the bad of it."
>
> (This tradition has also been reported by Al-Bukhari on the authority of Abu Hurairah.)

In summary, from these articles of faith emanate all that a Muslim should believe regarding Allah's right, the Day of Judgment, and all matters pertaining to the unseen world.

1. Belief in Allah

True belief in Allah implies that Allah is the True God who alone deserves to be worshipped, as He is the Creator and Sustainer of all human beings. It also necessitates the belief that Allah is fully aware of all the words and deeds, both secret and apparent, of every human, and He is able to reward the righteous, and punish the disobedient. In fact, Allah created mankind and jinn for the sole reason of worshipping Him alone. As the Qur'an says:

> "And I (Allah) did not create the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me. I do not seek any provision from them, nor do I want them to feed Me. Verily, Allah is the All-Provider, the Firm Possessor of Strength." (51:56-58)
>
> "O Mankind! Worship you Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous. (He) who has made for you the earth a bed (spread out), and the sky as a canopy, and sent down, from the

> sky, rain and brought forth thereby fruits, as provisions for you. So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know." (2:21, 22)

Allah sent the messengers, and the books to mankind in order to clarify this truth, call to it, and warn against all that contradicts it. As stated in the Qur'an:

> "And verily, We have sent among every *Ummah* a messenger, (with the command), 'Worship Allah and avoid *taghut* (false deities).'" (16:36)

> "And We did not send any messenger before you except that We revealed to himthat, 'There is no deity except Me, so worship Me.'" (21:25)

> "Alif-Lam-Ra (these letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an, and Allah alone knows their meaning). (This is) a Book whose verses are perfected and then explained in detail, from (One who is) All-Wise and Well-Acquainted. (Saying) worship none but Allah. Verily, I (Muhammad) am unto you, from Him, a warner and bringer of glad-tidings." (11:1, 2)

The reality of 'worship', as mentioned in the above verses, is to direct all of one's actions to Allah alone.

Such actions include supplications, fear and hope, prayers, fasting, making sacrifices, and taking vows, amongst other things. These acts of worship should be done out of love for Allah, and in total submission to His will, in fear of His chastisement, and in hope of His mercy. Many verses in the Qur'an clearly state this Islamic fundamental. Allah says in the Noble Qur'an:

> "Verily We have sent down the Book to you (O Muhammad) in truth. So worship Allah being sincere to Him in religion. Verily, for Allah is the pure religion..." (39:2-3)
>
> "And you Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him." (17:23)
>
> "So, invoke Allah, (being) sincere to Him in religion (by worshipping and obeying Him alone)..." (40:14)

Al-Bukhari and Muslim also reported, on the authority Mu'adh (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Allah's right upon His slaves is that they should worship Him alone, and not associate anyone with Him in worship."

Belief in Allah also necessitates belief in all the commanded obligations, including the five pillars, which are: 1) The declaration that none is worthy of worship except Allah, and Muhammad (pbuh) is His messenger 2) Performance of the daily prayers 3) Payment of *zakat* (charity) 4) Fasting during the month of Ramadan 5) Performance of *Hajj* (pilgrimage) to Makkah, if one is able.

The most important of all these pillars is the declaration of faith, that there is no other god except Allah, which requires offering sincere devotion to Allah alone. The worship of anyone besides Allah the Almighty is nothing but vain falsehood. As we read in the Noble Qur'an:

> "That is because Allah is The Truth, and that which they call upon other than Him is vain falsehood..." (22:62)

As mentioned earlier, Allah the Almighty created mankind and jinn to worship Him alone, and He sent messengers and books to explain this fundamental tenet to them. In the present age, many Muslims have neglected this basis, and have thus fallen into ignorance, and have, wittingly or unwittingly, worshipped others besides Allah. This is in serious violation of Allah's right of worship, and defies the basic foundation of Islam.

Belief in Allah also necessitates the belief that Allah is the sole Originator and Creator of all creation, and that He alone, with His total will and absolute knowledge, is the sole Disposer of all affairs. Allah the Almighty is the Master of the present world and the hereafter. He is the sole Cherisher and Sustainer of all the worlds, and there is no creator or lord aside from Him. Allah sent messengers and books as a mercy and guide to His creation, to call them towards that which will benefit them in this world and in the hereafter. Allah tells us in the Qur'an:

> "Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Guardian and Disposer of all affairs." (39:62)
>
> "Indeed, your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He rose over the Throne. He covers the night with the day, seeking it rapidly, and (He created) the sun, the moon and the stars, (all) subjected by His command. Surely, His is the creation and the commandment; Blessed be Allah, the Lord of the worlds." (7:54)

Another necessary condition for belief in Allah is belief in His beautiful names and lofty attributes that are clearly stated in the Qur'an, and authentically mentioned by His Prophet, Muhammad (pbuh). We should believe in all these divine attributes without changing them, completely ignoring them, twisting their meanings or claiming that they resemble human attributes. Rather, we must carry the belief that these names describe Allah in a manner that suits His majesty and grandeur, for none of His creations can ever resemble Him in any way.

> "There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing." (42:11)
>
> "So do not assert similarities to Allah. Indeed, Allah knows and you do not know." (16:74)

Such is the doctrine of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah*, the companions of Prophet (pbuh) Muhammad (pbuh) and those who follow in their footsteps. Imam Abu Al-Hasan Al-Ash'ari mentioned this doctrine in his book '*Al-Maqalat 'an As'habil Hadithi wa Ahlis-Sunnah.*' Other leading scholars have also mentioned this True Doctrine in their works.

Imam Al-Awza'i said:

> "Az-Zuhri and Makhul were questioned about the verses which mention Allah's attributes and they replied, 'Leave them as they are.'" That is, do not interpret them.

Al-Walid bin Muslim said:

> "Malik, Al-Awza'i, Al-Laith bin Sa'd, and Sufyan Ath-Thawri, may Allah have mercy upon them, were asked about the narration concerning Allah's attributes, and they all said to believe in them all without interpreting their meanings."

Al-Awza'i said:

> "We used to say, in the presence of *At-Tabi'un*, the successors of the Prophet's companions, that Allah is over His throne, and we believed in all the Prophetic traditions concerning Allah's attributes."

When Rabi'ah bin Abu 'Abdur-Rahman, the teacher of Imam Malik, was asked about the verse, "Allah rose over His throne..." (7:54), he replied:

> "Allah's rising over the throne is not to be denied, but to imagine the manner in which this is done is impossible. The message is from Allah, the Prophet (pbuh) conveyed this message, and we have to believe it as it is."

When Imam Malik himself was questioned about the manner in which Allah rose over the throne, he replied:

> "Allah's action of rising over the throne is known, but the manner in which this was done is not known. Belief in this matter is obligatory, and inquiring about this matter is an innovation in religion, or *bid'ah*.
> Then he addressed this inquirer thus, "You are but an evil person." Then, he asked the people around him to send the questioner out. Umm Salamah, the Prophet (pbuh)'s wife, is reported to have made the same

statement.

Imam Abu 'Abdur-Rahman 'Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak said, concerning this topic, "We know that our Lord, Glorious is He, is over His throne and over the heavens, distinct from His creation."

The religious scholars have written so much on this topic that it is impossible to quote them all in this treatise. Anyone who is interested in finding out more about this subject can refer to works written by scholars of *sunnah* in this regard. These include, among others, 'Abdullah bin Imam Ahmad's '*As-Sunnah*,' Muhammad bin Khuzaimah's '*At-Tawhid*,' and Abdul Qasim At-Tabarani's '*As-Sunnah*.' One can also refer to Imam Ibn Taymiyyah's reply to the people of Hamat, Syria, in which he delineated the belief of *Ahlus-Sunnah*, as well as providing supportive, logical and textual evidence from the Qur'an and *sunnah*, thus collapsing the opposing opinion. He also dealt with this subject in his treatise known as '*Ar-Risalatu At-Tadmiriyyah*' in which he cited the belief of *Ahlus-Sunnah* along with logical and textual evidence from the Qur'an and *sunnah*, leaving no room for argument for the objective seekers of truth. Whoever adopts an opinion concerning Allah's names and attributes that is other than the position of *Ahlus-Sunnah* will certainly contravene massive logical and textual evidence from the Qur'an and *sunnah*.

Ahlus-Sunnah have confirmed all the Names and attributes that Allah confirmed for Himself, either through the Qur'an or through authentic traditions of the Prophet (pbuh). This has been done without changing the names, twisting their meanings, ignoring them, or likening them to attributes of Allah's creatures. All possible proofs have been taken into account in order to avoid falling into obvious contradictions. It is Allah's plan to make supreme the argument of the objective and sincere seekers of truth.

> "Nay, we hurl the truth against falsehood, and it destroys it, and behold, it (falsehood) is vanished" (21:18)
>
> "And no question do they bring to you but We reveal to you the truth and the best explanation." (25:33)

Commenting on thc verse:

> "Indeed, you Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He rose over the Throne..." (7:54)

The renowned exegete of the Qur'an (*mufassir*), Al Hafiz Ibn Kathir said:

> "People in this regard adopt far too many different opinions, which are not possible to cite here. However, we adopt, in this regard, the position of (the righteous predecessors),

> *As-Salaf-us-Salih*, past and present, such as Malik, Al-Awza'i, Ath-Thawri, Al-Laith bin Sa'd, Ash-Shafi'i, Ahmad, and Ishaq bin Rahwaih. They all believed in Allah's attributes without twisting their meanings, ignoring them completely, or likening them to those of His creatures."

And whatever image comes to ones mind about Allah should be rejected, for "there is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing." (42:11)

Nu'aim Al-Khuza'i, the teacher of Imam Bukhari, said:

> "Whoever likens Allah to His creatures is a disbeliever, and whoever denies the attributes that Allah ascribes to Himself is a disbeliever. It is impossible to liken Allah to any of His creatures. Guided are those who confirm to Allah the attributes, in a manner suiting His majesty, as mentioned in the clear Qur'anic verses and authentic Prophetic traditions, and reject all blemishes as to Allah's attributes."

2. Belief in the Angels

A Muslim should believe in all of Allah's angels, whom He created to worship Him, and whom He describes as "honored slaves."(21:28) The Qur'an says, about the angels:

> "He knows what is before them, and what is after them, and they cannot intercede except on behalf of one whom He (Allah) approves. And they stand in awe for fear of Him." (21:28)

The angels fall into different categories, and they are assigned different duties. There are, amongst others, those who bear the throne of Allah (40:7), those who guard Paradise and Hell, and those who record the deeds, to mention but a few. All Muslims should believe in those angels that Allah named, such as Jibril (Gabriel), Mika'il, Malik (the guardian of Hellfire), and Israfil (the blower of the trumpet), may peace be upon them all. Aisha reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "The angels were created from light; the jinn were created from a smokeless flame of fire, and Adam was created from what has been described to you." (Muslim)

3. Belief in the Books

A Muslim must believe that Allah has sent down books upon His messengers to clarify His right and to call to it, as Allah says in the Qur'an:

> "Indeed, We have sent messengers with clear proofs, and sent down with them the scripture and the balance (justice) so that the people may maintain (their affairs) in justice." (57:25)
>
> "Mankind was one *ummah* (community) and Allah sent Prophets with glad tidings and warnings, and with them He sent the scripture in truth to judge between the people in matters wherein they differed." (2:213)

Among the books that we, as Muslims, believe in are the revealed books that Allah named, such as the Torah, the Gospel, the Psalms, and the Qur'an. The Glorious Qur'an is the final and the best of all these books. It confirms and replaces the scriptures that came before it and it is a witness over them, testifying the truth and falsifying the falsehood therein. Every Muslim should follow the commands contained in the Qur'an, shun its prohibitions, and refer to its rulings to settle differences. Alongside the Qur'an, it is also a must to follow the authentic *sunnah* of the Prophet (pbuh), as his life, words and actions are a model for all of us to follow. Allah sent Muhammad (pbuh) as a mercy to both the jinn and mankind, and sent down the Noble Qur'an to judge between them. He also made the Glorious Qur'an a healing for diseases, such as hypocrisy, ignorance and doubt, and a clarification for all issues, as well as a guidance and mercy for all those

> have no argument against Allah, after the messengers." (4:165)
>
> "Muhammad is not the father of (any) one of your men, but (he is) the messenger of Allah and the seal (i.e. last) of the Prophets…" (33:40)

5. Belief in the Last Day

Belief in the Last Day includes belief in all that will happen after death, based on that which Allah and His messenger have informed us about. This includes the trial in the grave, and the torment or the bliss therein. As well, it includes the belief in all that will be witnessed on the Day of Judgment, such as the bridge set over the Hell-fire, the balance (of deeds), the reckoning, the reward and punishment, and the records, which will be placed in the rights hands of the successful believers, while the wretched disbelievers will receive their records in their left hands, behind their backs. We must also believe in the reality of Paradise and Hell-fire, as well as the river that will be given to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and the fact that the righteous believers will look to their Lord, and He will address them. These are just a few of the beliefs concerning the Last Day, and many others are clearly mentioned in the

Qur'an, and authentically reported from the Prophet (pbuh).

6. Belief in the Divine Destiny

Belief in *qadar*, or divine destiny, is comprised of four points:

First, the belief that Allah knows all what has been and what will be. He is aware of everything concerning His slaves. He knows their provisions and sustenance, their appointed terms on earth, their deeds, and everything else related to them. Nothing is hidden from Allah, as the Noble Qur'an says:

> "...Verily, Allah is the All-Knower of everything." (58:7)
>
> "...That you may know that Allah has power over all things, and that Allah has encompassed all things with His knowledge." (65:12)

Second, the belief that Allah the Almighty keeps all that He decrees in a Clear Book, or *Al-Lauh Al-Mahfudh*, as is mentioned in the Noble Qur'an:

> "We know what the earth takes of them (i.e. their dead bodies), and with Us is a book preserved (i.e. the book of decrees)." (50:4)
>
> "...And all things We have recorded in a Clear Book." (36:12)
>
> "Do you not know that Allah knows what is

> in the heavens and earth? Indeed, it is all in a Book (i.e. *Al-Lauh Al-Mahfudh*). Indeed that, for Allah, is easy." (22:70)

Third, the belief that Allah's will is absolute and powerful, and that whatever He decrees will be, and whatever He does not decree will never come to pass.

> "...Verily, Allah does what He wills" (22:18)
>
> "Verily, when He intends a thing, His command is 'be", and it is." (36:82)
>
> "And you do not will except as Allah wills, the Lord of the Worlds." (81:29)

Fourth, the belief that Allah is the Sole Creator of all things, as Allah says in the Qur'an:

> "Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the Guardian and Disposer of all affairs." (39:62)
>
> "O mankind! Remember the grace of Allah upon you! Is there a creator other than Allah who provides for you from the sky and the earth? There is no God worthy of worship except Him. How then are you turning away (from Him)?" (35:3)

Belief in the divine destiny is composed of these four categories that have just been mentioned. This is the position of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah*, and only those who yield to innovations in religion deny some of these categories.

Opposition of the True Doctrine:

The belief in Allah also includes the belief that faith comprises both words and deeds, and that this faith increases with acts of obedience and decreases with sins and disobedience. However, it is not permissible to accuse fellow Muslims of disbelief *(kufr)* as a result of their committing acts of disobedience or major sins, such as adultery, stealing, usury, alcohol consumption, or other sins, as long as the sinner does not regard these sins as permissible. Allah tells us in the Noble Qur'an:

> "Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him in worship, but He forgives anything else, to Whom He pleases." (4:116)

Authentic Prophetic traditions also tell us that Allah will ultimately take out of Hell-fire whoever has an atom's weight of faith.

Belief in Allah also necessitates love for Allah's sake, hate for His sake, and making friends and enemies for His sake. A true believer loves his fellow believers and takes them for friends. The best of the believers that we should love are the righteous companions of the Prophet; they are the best of mankind, after the Prophet, as Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, in an authentic tradition:

> "The best of generations are my generations, then those who follow them, then those who follow them."

The best of the Prophet's companions can be listed in the following order, starting with the best: Abu Bakr, Umar bin Al-Khattab, Uthman bin 'Affan, then, Ali bin Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with them all. Then there are those companions who were given the glad tidings of entering Paradise, and then follow the rest of the beloved companions. As Muslims, we should disregard the arguments that may have risen amongst the companions, and believe that they did their best to do that which they believed to be right. As well we should love the family of our beloved Prophet (pbuh), and his pious wives who are the mothers of the believers. Muslims should free themselves from the views of members of the Shiite sect, who blaspheme the Prophet's righteous companions, and place the Prophet's family members in a position that is higher than that which Allah chose for them. As well, we must shun the position held by the *An-Nawasib* group who harm the Prophet's family in word and deed.

The points mentioned thus far are a brief summary o the True Doctrine for which Allah sent His messenger, and these beliefs are those of the righteous followers, about which the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "A group of my followers will continue to be given victory while holding on to the truth. No harm will be done to them by those who forsake them, until Allah's command comes to pass."

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) also said:

> "The Jews were divided into seventy-one sects; the Christians were divided into seventy-two sects, and my followers will be divided into seventy-three sects, which all will be (punished) in Hell-fire with the exception of one." When the companions asked the Prophet (pbuh) to identify that sect, he replied, "Those who are upon that which my companions and I follow."

Indeed, this is the authentic creed which we must all follow. Those who contradict and deviate from this belief fall into many categories. They include, among others, those who worship idols, jinn, angels, saints, trees, stones, and other things. These people have not followed the call of Allah's messengers; rather they stubbornly rejected it and followed their own whims. This is exactly what the Quraish, and other Arab tribes, did when Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) came with the clear truth from his Lord.

They used to beseech their false gods to fulfill their needs, heal their sick, and grant them victory over their enemies. They would also offer sacrifices to these idols and make vows in their names. When our beloved Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) disapproved of their unsupported beliefs, and called them to worship Allah and not associate partners with Him, they replied:

"Has he made (all) the gods into one God? Truly, this is a strange thing!" (38:5)

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) did not yield to despair. He continued calling the people to worship Allah alone, warning them against associating others with Allah, and explaining to them the reality of Islam. His efforts eventually paid off when the Arabs entered Allah's religion in crowds. With Allah's help and the massive efforts of the Prophet and his companions, Islam then reigned supreme and prevailed over all religions. In later ages, this situation then reverted when ignorance, once again, began to dominate the minds of the people; and many people returned to ignorant practices, including all forms of *shirk* (associating others with Allah). This phenomenon continues to spread in our present day society, largely due to ignorance and lack of understanding. People who implement these acts of ignorance put forward an argument similar to that put forward by their predecessors, such as:

> "...These are our intercessors with Allah..." (10:18)
>
> "...We only worship them in order that they may bring us closer to Allah..." (39:3)

Allah has refuted these false claims and made it clear that worshipping any other than Him is outright disbelief and *shirk*. We read in the Noble Qur'an:

> "They worship, besides Allah, that which can neither hurt them nor benefit them, and they say, 'These are our intercessors with Allah.'..." (10:18)

Allah refuted this claim in the same verse, as follows:

> "Say, 'Do you inform Allah of something He does not know in the heavens or in the earth?' Glory be to Him and He is exalted high above that which what they associate with Him." (10:18)

These verses clearly indicate that worshipping prophets, saints, and others besides Allah, is a major form of *shirk*, which is an unpardonable sin. Allah says in the Qur'an, about the disbelievers:

> "...And those who take protectors besides Him (saying), 'We only worship them so that they may bring us closer to Allah..." (39:3)

Allah replies to their false claim as follows:

> "...Truly, Allah will judge between them in

> that wherein they differ. Indeed, Allah does not guide he who is a liar and a disbeliever." (39:3)

In this verse, Allah makes it crystal clear that any worship offered to other than Him, whether in the form of invocation, hope, fear or otherwise, is blatant disbelief. Allah the Almighty also calls such people liars when they claim that their false gods bring them closer to Him.

There are a number of ideologies and philosophies in our present time which contradict the Islamic true belief in every way. Many of these ideologies were invented by people such as Marx, Lenin and others, and their ideas call towards atheism and disbelief. People give these false dogmas names such as Socialism, Communism and Ba'thism. Many of these man-made belief systems go as far as to deny the Last Day, Paradise and Hell, and they reject all religions, claiming that there is no god and that life is the only existence. Those who follow these ideologies will certainly bear the worst of consequences in this life and in the hereafter.

There are many other belief systems that contradict the true Islamic doctrine, whose followers believe that their so-called saints are Allah's partners in His rule and disposition of the world's affairs. They give these saints names such as *Aqtab, Awtad* and *Aghwath*. Indeed, this is one of the worst form of *shirk* with relation to Allah's Lordship. There are many other sects that contradict the true belief; they go by names such as *Al-Batiniyyah, Al-Jahmiyah, Al-Asha'irah* and *Al-Mu'tazilah.* Some groups completely ignore Allah's lofty, perfect attributes, thus not giving Allah His due right of worship. Some other sects deny certain attributes of Allah, while accepting others, thus contradicting clear, logical and textual evidence from the Qur'an and *sunnah.* Far is He above that which they say about Him!

In the Muslim world today, unfortunately, practices involving *shirk* go as far as joining partners with Allah in Lordship. For example, the unacceptable rituals that take place at the shrines of Al-Hussain and Al-Badawi in Egypt; the shrine of Eidarous in Aden, the shrine of Al-Hadi in Yemen, the shrine of Ibn 'Arabi in Syria, the shrine of 'Abdul-Qadir Al-Jilani in Iraq, and the list goes on. To make matters worse, there are not enough people who take great pains to abolish ignorant thinking, and remind these people of the reality of *tawhid* (the Oneness of Allah), with which Allah sent His beloved Messenger. We pray to Allah the Almighty to guide us all to the truth, and to help Muslim leaders to combat and uproot this phenomenon.

All Muslims must hold firm to the correct and True Doctrine, which is that of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-*

Jama'ah. This belief confirms all of Allah's names and attributes that He has confirmed for Himself in the Qur'an or through His Prophet (pbuh). Allah the Almighty is set far above all of His creations, and there is no one who bears any resemblance to Him in any way. Every Muslim should refer to all proofs in the Qur'an and *sunnah* without twisting meanings, so as to avoid the confusion into which others have fallen. Such is the belief that will lead to salvation in this life and in the hereafter. It is the straight path which was followed by the pious predecessors and their leaders. The condition of the present day Muslim community can never be rectified unless this same path is followed; the path of the predecessors who held tight to Allah's Holy Book, and the *sunnah* of His messenger; and the path of those who shun all that contradicts the True Doctrine.

❖ THE EVIDENCE AGAINST SEEKING REFUGE IN OTHER THAN ALLAH AND BELIEF IN FORTUNETELLERS AND SOOTHSAYERS

PART A

The Directive Concerning Seeking Help from the Prophet (pbuh)

All praise is due to Allah, and may peace and blessings be upon the Prophet of Allah, the members of his family, his companions, and on all those who proceed on his path.

The weekly magazine, "Al-Mujtama'", of Kuwait, published a poem (issue no. 15, dated 19-4-1390 A.H.) containing invocations to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and appeals to him to help the *Ummah* (Islamic community), and to salvage it from disunity and disagreement. The poem, signed by someone named Amina, ran as follows:

> "O Prophet of Allah, come to the rescue of a world caught in the flames of a war, O Prophet of Allah, come to the rescue of the *Ummah*, plunged in the darkness of doubts since long, O Prophet of Allah, come to the

> rescue of the *Ummah* which has lost sight of its vision in the wilderness of grief... etc. etc."

And the poem concluded with the following lines:

> "O Prophet of Allah, come to the rescue of the *Ummah*, plunged in the darkness of doubt since long. Pray you! Bring speedy victory as you did at the battle of Badr when you called out to the Almighty, and lo! Defeat was turned to a glorious victory. Verily Allah has soldiers you do not see."

Thus, the person who wrote this poem cries out to the Prophet, beseeching him to rescue the *Ummah* by achieving speedy victory. She forgets, or ignores the fact, that victory is granted by Allah the Almighty alone, and that it is not in the hands of the Prophet (pbuh), nor in the hands of any other creation. Allah the Almighty says in the Noble Qur'an

> "And there is no victory except from Allah, the Almighty, the All-Wise." (3:126)
>
> "If Allah helps you, none can overcome you; and if He forsakes you, who is there after Him that can help you?..." (3:160)

It has been established by the verses of the Noble Qur'an that Allah the Almighty created all human beings so that they may worship Him. He sent messengers and revealed books to expound the manner of worship, and to guide mankind towards the straight path. In this regard, Allah the Almighty states in the Noble Qur'an

> "And I (Allah) did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship me (alone)." (51:56)
>
> "And verily, We have sent among every *Ummah* (community, nation) a messenger (proclaiming): 'Worship Allah (alone) and avoid *Taghut* (false deities)..." (16:36)
>
> "And We sent not before you (O Muhammad) any messenger except that We revealed to him that: 'there is no deity except Me, so worship Me.'" (21:25)
>
> "Alif-Lam-Ra (these letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an, and Allah alone knows their meaning). (This is) a Book whose verses are perfected and then explained in detail, from (One who is) All-Wise and Well-Acquainted. (Saying) worship none but Allah. Verily, I (Muhammad) am unto you, from Him, a warner and bringer of glad-tidings." (11:1, 2)

It is clear from the above verses that Allah the Almighty has created human beings and jinn for one purpose only; to worship Him and to never attribute any partner to Him. He has clearly stated that the messengers were sent to call towards this worship and to forbid all that is contrary to it. The verses of the Qur'an are clear and unconditional in stating that Allah, and Allah alone, is to be worshipped. This worship implies faith in the Oneness of Allah, obedience to Him, compliance to His commands, and abstention from all that has been forbidden by Him. Allah has ordained these tenets in numerous verses:

> "And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, and worship none but Him alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him)." (98:5)
>
> "And your Lord decreed that you worship none but Him...." (17:23)
>
> "Verily, We have sent down the Book to you (O Muhammad) in truth: So worship Allah (alone) being sincere to Him in religion. Surely, the pure religion (i.e. worship and obedience) is for Allah only...." (39:2, 3)
>
> "So, invoke Allah, (being) sincere to Him in religion (by worshipping and obeying Him alone), however much the disbelievers may hate it". (40:14)
>
> "And the mosques are for Allah (alone) so do not invoke anyone along with Allah." (72:18)

This preceding verse applies to all creation, including Prophets, because the word *Ahad* (translated here as 'anyone') in Arabic is an indefinite noun used in the context of total negation. Thus, absolutely no one is to be invoked except Allah the All-Powerful. As we read in the Qur'an:

> "And do not invoke, besides Allah, that which neither benefits you, nor harms you, for if you did, then indeed you would be one of the *dhalimun* (wrongdoers)." (10:106)

This verse is addressed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), despite the fact that the Prophet enjoys Divine protection from polytheistic beliefs; the purpose is to cautions others. If the Prophet (pbuh), who is the foremost among all of mankind, has himself been warned that if he invokes other than Allah, then he will be deemed a wrong-doer, then what can be said of other human beings?

It must be noted that the word *dhulm* or injustice, is used here in the sense of major shirk, that is polytheism. Allah the Almighty says:

> "...And it is the disbelievers who are the *dhalimun* (wrong-doers)." (2:254)
>
> "...Verily! Joining others in worship with Allah is a great *dhulm* (injustice) indeed." (31:13)

It is clearly evident, from all these verses, that beseeching anyone other than Allah is an act of joining others with Allah in worship. This grave sin defies the purpose for which Allah created mankind and the jinn; it contradicts the Divine message which has been conveyed through Allah's messengers and revealed books. This is the essence of the phrase 'There is no God except Allah,' which is the basis of our faith, and no worship will be true unless this basic principle is sincerely accepted. Allah the Almighty says in the Noble Qur'an:

"That is because Allah, He is The Truth, and who believe. The verses in the Qur'an related to this topic are many; following are two examples:

> "And this is a Book (i.e. the Qur'an) which We have sent down as a blessing, so follow it and fear Allah, so that you may receive mercy." (6:155)
>
> "And We have sent down to you the Book (i.e. the Qur'an) as a clarification for all things, a guidance, a mercy, and glad tidings for Muslims." (16:89)
>
> "Say (O Muhammad): 'O Mankind! I am sent to you all as the messenger of Allah, to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; there is no deity except Him. It is He who gives life and causes death.' So believe in Allah and His messenger, the unlettered Prophet (i.e. Muhammad), who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him, so that you may be guided." (7:158)

4. Belief in the Messengers

A Muslim must believe in all of Allah's messengers without exception. This belief includes the fact that Allah sent messengers to mankind from amongst them, as warners, bearers of glad tidings, and callers to the truth. Whoever follows them will certainly attain bliss and happiness, and whoever opposes them will be doomed and disgraced. Muhammad (pbuh) was the best of all these messengers. Of the Prophets that we believe in, are ones that have been authentically reported by Allah and His messenger, such as Nuh, Hud, Saleh, Ibrahim, and many others. Allah says in the Qur'an, concerning His messengers:

> "And assuredly, We have sent amongst every people a messenger (proclaiming), 'Worship Allah (alone) and avoid *taghut* (false deities).'" (16:36)
>
> "(We sent) messengers as bringers of good tidings, and warners so that mankind will that which they invoke besides Him is *Al-Batil* (falsehood)." (31:30)
>
> "And indeed it has been revealed to you (O Muhammad), as it was to those (messengers) before you: 'If you joined others in worship with Allah, (then) surely (all) your deeds would be in vain, and you would certainly be among the losers.'"(39:65)

> "...But if they had joined others in worship with Allah, all that they used to do would have been of no benefit to them." (6:88)

Thus, it is clearly apparent that the straight path, Islam, is based on two comprehensive principles:

1. That Allah alone is to be worshipped.
2. That the worship should be according to the path shown by the last Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (pbuh).

This is the meaning of the *Shahada* (declaration of faith), "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." Clearly, then, it is a major contradiction of this principle to invoke Allah's own creations, such as Prophets, idols, the dead, the jinn, forces of nature etc. Offering sacrifices or vows to these false powers, in order to gain their help or favor, amounts to setting up rivals to Allah the Almighty. Seeking their help in any way is an act of accrediting Lordship and power of creation to other than Allah. In other words, such acts are a total negation of the basic fabric of Islam. Moreover, none has the right to introduce anything into the religion that has not been permitted by Allah. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has said in an authentic *Hadith* (tradition):

> "He who innovates something in this matter of ours (i.e. Islam) that is not of it, will have

rejected it." Allah tells us in the Qur'an:

> "And We shall turn to (i.e. regard) whatever deeds they (disbelievers, polytheists) did, and We shall make such deeds as scattered floating particles of dust." (25:23)

Such are the deeds of those who spend their lives following polytheistic beliefs, false worship, and contrived actions that have not been sanctioned by the Lord of the Worlds, Allah the Almighty. Thus, all deeds that are not in accordance with the Divine guidance will have been done in vain. On the Day of Judgment, the effort put into these deeds will be regarded as futile, like scattered particles of dust. Let us refer back to the poem presented at the beginning of this essay, in which the author invokes the Prophet (pbuh) and calls for his help. We now see that only the Lord of all creation, Allah, has the right to receive this form of supplication. It is Allah alone in whose hands lies victory, as well as defeat; He alone bestows help, loss and benefit. None other, besides Allah, can benefit or grant aid. Thus, praying to the Prophet (pbuh) for help is, in essence, is a form of associating others with Allah; it is one of the many faces of shirk (polytheism), and is a serious violation of Allah's decree. Allah warns us in the Qur'an of the consequences of being haughty with regards to His worship:

> "And your Lord said: 'Invoke Me, I will respond to you. Indeed, those who scorn My worship will enter Hell in humiliation.'" (40:60)

This verse points out that invocation is a form of prayer, and punishment awaits those who are too arrogant to pray to Allah, while He is All-powerful, Omnipotent and Omnipresent. We read in the Noble Qur'an:

> "And when my slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then (answer them) I am indeed near. I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me. So let them respond to Me (by obedience) and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright." (2:186)

It is narrated in an authentic *hadith* that the Prophet (pbuh) advised his cousin, Abdullah bin Abbas, as follows:

> "Remember Allah and He will remember you. Remember Allah and you shall find Him in your path. If you ask, ask from Allah, and if you seek help, seek from Allah." In another *hadith*, he said,
>
> "He who dies while praying to someone as rival to Allah will enter the hellfire." (Narrated by Imam Bukhari)

On the same subject, the Prophet (pbuh) was once asked as to which sin is the greatest. He replied, "To make someone as a rival to Allah, while He is the one who created you."

It is worth noting here that the shirk involved with invoking idols, devout persons, jinn etc., for help, is not the same as asking for worldly help from live, fellow human beings. It is normal and acceptable to seek the help of those around you, in all matters of life. We read in the Noble Qur'an, concerning the story of Prophet Musa (peace be upon him):

> "...The man of his (own) party asked him for help against his enemy..." (28:15)

So, humans require the help of others throughout life, and in times of difficulty. Allah ordered his Prophet (pbuh) to convey to the people that he does not possess the power to bring about harm or benefit. It is stated in the Noble Qur'an:

> "Say (O Muhammad), 'I invoke only my Lord, and I associate none as partners along with Him.' Say: 'It is not in my power to cause you harm, or to bring you to the Right Path.'" (72:20, 21)
>
> "Say (O Muhammad), 'I possess no power of benefit or harm to myself except as Allah wills. If I had knowledge of the *Ghaib* (unseen), I should have secured for myself

> and abundance of wealth, and no evil should have touched me. I am but a warner, and a bringer of glad tidings unto people who believe. (7:188)

The Qur'anic verses on this concept are numerous. The Prophet (pbuh) never invoked anyone other than Allah, and he never sought help from anyone other than Him. He beseeched Allah during the battle of Badr, and asked Him for victory against the enemy. He persistently prayed to Allah saying: "O Lord, fulfill for me your promise." He kept repeating these words to the extent that his friend and companion Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "May it suffice you, O Prophet of Allah; verily, Allah will fulfill His promise to you." In this context, Allah revealed the following verse of the Qur'an:

> "(Remember) when you sought the help of your Lord and He answered you (saying): 'I will help you with a thousand of the angels, following one another in succession.' And Allah made it only as glad tidings, and so that your hearts may be at rest therewith. And there is no victory except by the help of Allah. Verily, Allah is Almighty, All-Wise." (8:9, 10)

So, Allah reminds the Muslims of their call for help, and how He responded to them by sending reinforcements of angels to them. The fact is also made clear that the victory was not from the angels, but the angels were merely sent to convey the good news. As Allah says in the Qur'an:

> "And there is no victory except from Allah." (3: 126)
>
> "And Allah has already made you victorious at Badr, while you were weak (i.e. in number). So fear Allah, so that you may be grateful." (3:123)

Thus, Allah granted the Muslims help at the battle of Badr. The weapons, the power to fight and the angels were all the factors that brought victory and glad tidings. These were only the means by which the Divine victory was granted, as victory is only from Allah.

So then, referring back to the poem, how could anyone seek victory from the Prophet (pbuh) and turn away from the Lord of all creation, Who is Omnipresent and Omnipotent? Such an act displays ignorance, and is an act of association. It is the duty of the writer to repent to Allah in all sincerity, and to never repeat such a mistake. Sincere repentance requires total conviction and compliance to what has been ordained by Allah. If repentance is to be made for a sin affecting the rights of fellow human beings, such rights should be returned to whom they belong, or the repentant should request an acquittal. Allah has ordered His worshippers to repent, and He has promised acceptance of their repentance. He tells us in the Qur'an:

> "...And turn to Allah in repentance, all of you, O believers, so that you may succeed." (24:31)

And Allah says with regard to the Christians:

> "Will they not repent to Allah and ask His forgiveness? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (5:74)

And Allah says:

> "And those who do not invoke any other god along with Allah, nor kill such life as Allah has forbidden, except for just cause, nor commit unlawful sexual intercourse - And whoever does this shall receive the punishment. The torment will be multiplied for him on the Day of Resurrection, and he will abide therein in disgrace; Except those who repent and believe, and do righteous deeds, for those, Allah will change their sins into good deeds, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (25:68-70)

In this brief essay, I have sought to explain the magnitude and danger of the sin of shirk (polytheism), because it is the greatest sin. It is in my earnest desire that the readers of this booklet understand this issue in its right perspective, so that they may avoid being misled by false writings.

In conclusion, I pray to Allah the Almighty to make these few words of use to Muslims, and may He reform us all and make us always proceed on the right path, and may He fortify us with knowledge of the religion and steadfastness in adhering to it. May Allah protect us from the evils within ourselves, and from our bad deeds. Verily, He is the Protector and Sustainer. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon His slave and messenger Muhammad, and the members of his family and his companions.

PART B

The Directive Concerning Seeking Help from Jinn and others, and Making Vows to Them

From 'Abdul 'Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz, to those Muslims - may Allah bless them and me - who adhere to the religion of Allah and remain committed to it. Amin

May the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

Some friends sought to ask me about the actions of some uninformed brethren of our religion. They stated that these people, at times of calamity, invoke certain forces and seek their help. For instance, they invoke the jinn, and give offerings and animal sacrifices to them. Some may mention the jinn in such a manner: "O you Seven (i.e. seven chiefs of the jinn) take him!" They might also exclaim: "O you seven, inflict on him such and such harm... break his bones, drink his blood, etc. etc." Some may say: "O jinn of noon, O jinn of evening, take him." These practices are prevalent in some of the Southern areas. In addition, many people, who profess Islam, invoke the dead, Prophets, noble souls, angels and others, seeking their help. The reason for these actions may be ignorance, or the desire to imitate and follow the practices of their forefathers. Some people may try to justify their actions by saying "This is just a trend in speech, we do not mean anything by it, nor do we have any faith in it." Some friends have also sought my opinion concerning marriage with people know for the aforementioned actions, as well as the validity of praying behind them, praying for them, and accepting their offerings. Finally, I have been asked about how we should view magicians, and soothsayers who, I was told, claim knowledge of the illness of a person, and reasons for it, merely by casting a look at anything on the body of the patient (i.e. turban, clothing, veil etc.)

In response to the above inquiries, I would like to state the following:

All Praise is due to Allah, the One and Only Allah, and blessings and peace be upon the Prophet of Allah, who was the last of all Prophets. May peace and blessings also be upon his family, companions and on all those who abide by the path of right guidance until the Day of Judgment. Verily, Allah the Almighty has created humans and jinn in order that they may worship Him alone, and abstain from worshipping, invoking or offering sacrifice to any other being. Allah has sent messengers and revealed Heavenly Books to guide the people towards this belief system. The greatest of these Heavenly books, the Noble Qur'an, was revealed in order to convey the message of monotheism, and to warn against associating anyone in worship with Allah. This is the core of the declaration of faith: "There is no god except Allah." This statement clearly sets out the principle that there is no one else to be worshipped except Allah. The Qur'an and *ahadith* (traditions) are overflowing with evidence of this fact. Allah tells us in the Noble Qur'an:

"And I (Allah) did not create the jinn and

> mankind except to worship Me." (51:56)
>
> "And your Lord had decreed that you worship none but Him..." (17:23)
>
> "And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, and worship none but Him alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him)." (98:5)
>
> "And your Lord said: 'Invoke Me, I will respond to you. Indeed, those who scorn My worship will enter Hell in humiliation.'" (40:60)
>
> "And when my slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then (answer them) I am indeed near. I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me." (2:186)

Hence, it is a duty on every Muslim to worship Allah alone, as is commanded, and to invoke Him, as invocation is a form of worship. Allah states in the Qur'an:

> "Say (O Muhammad): Verily my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims." (6:162, 163)

Allah has ordered His Prophet (pbuh) to inform the people that his prayer, sacrifice, life and death are all for the sake of Allah, Lord of all creations, who has no partner. The word 'sacrifice' here refers to the offering of an animal sacrifice; thus, offering sacrifice to anyone other than Allah (i.e. jinn, angels etc.) amounts to *shirk* (associating partners with Allah). Such an act is parallel to praying to someone other than Allah, since sacrifice is a form of worship. The Prophet (pbuh) mentioned, in an authentic *hadith*, "The curse of Allah is upon anyone who offers sacrifice to other than Allah." Imam Ahmed has, on the authority of Tariq bin Shihab, narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Two men passed by a people who had an idol. Any person who passed by this idol was required to make an offering to it. The people asked one of the two men to give an offering. They told him that he may offer anything, even a small fly, so the man gave a fly to the idol and was then allowed to pass. Consequentially, his doom was the fire of Hell. The second man was also asked to do accordingly, but he refused, affirming that he will not offer to anyone other than Allah. On his refusal, the people killed and beheaded him, but his ultimate abode was paradise."

This narration demonstrates the fact that even a small offering, such as a fly, to an idol constitutes *shirk* (polytheism), the punishment of which is severe. So then, imagine the gravity of the sin of offering sacrifices and vows to jinn, angels, the dead etc., in order to gain their favors. These acts are based on the false assumption that these beings have the power to protect people, cure illnesses, protect one's wealth, or they may even be done out of fear of the jinn. Such acts are much more deserving of punishment than merely killing a fly for an idol. It is written in the Noble Qur'an:

> "Verily, We have sent down the Book to you (O Muhammad) in truth: So worship Allah (alone) being sincere to Him in religion. Surely, the pure religion (i.e. worship and obedience) is for Allah only. And those who take protectors besides Him (saying): 'We worship them only that they may bring us nearer to Allah.' Verily, Allah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Truly, Allah guides not he who is a liar and a disbeliever." (39:2, 3)
>
> "And they worship other than Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say: 'These are our intercessors with Allah.' Say: 'Do you inform Allah of

> something He does not know in the heavens or on earth? Glorified and Exalted is He high above all that they associate with Him." (10:18)

We learn, from the above two verses that polytheists tend to take certain creations as friends and protectors in lieu of Allah. They worship and invoke these creations in awe and reverence, and offer them vows and sacrifices, under the assumption that these friends will bring them nearer to Allah. Allah the Almighty has exposed their falsehood and described such people as liars, infidels and disbelievers; and Allah is "Glorified and Exalted high above all that they associate with Him." Allah warns us that this type of sin is a tremendous crime:

> "Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should be set up in worship with Him, but He forgives, besides that, (anything else) to whom He pleases. And whoever sets up partners with Allah in worship, he has indeed invented a tremendous sin." (4:48)
>
> "Verily, whosoever sets up partners in worship with Allah, then Allah has forbidden Paradise for him, and the Fire will be his abode. And for the *dhalimun* (polytheists, wrong-doers), there are no helpers. (5:72)

On the Day of Judgment intercession will only be granted to the people who believe in the sole Oneness of Allah, and abide by it sincerely; no help will be granted to the polytheists. When the Prophet (pbuh) was asked by the people as to who will be fortunate enough to enjoy his intercession on the Day of Judgment. He said: "Whoever says, with all sincerity of his heart, that there is no god but Allah only." He also said:

> "Every Prophet has an invocation that will be answered; and every Prophet hastened in his invocation, but I withheld by invocation so that I may intercede for my people on the Day of Judgment. Allah willing, my invocation will also include those of my nation who died without setting up partners with Allah."

The polytheist at the time of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) believed in Allah as their Lord, Creator and Sustainer, but they relied on Prophets, angels, trees, stones etc, as friends and protectors. They believed that these friends were capable of interceding for them and bringing them closer to Allah, as mentioned in the verses quoted above. Allah did not pardon them for this sin; indeed Allah has renounced them and described them as infidels and polytheists. Allah also disproved their claim that these false gods will intercede and bring them closer to Allah. The Prophet (pbuh) was ordered by Divine commandment to fight against those polytheists who persecuted the believers, and tried to deny them the freedom of worshipping Allah alone:

> "And fight them until there is no more *fitnah* (trial, disbelief, oppression) and the religion will be all for Allah." (8:39)

Allah mentions in the Qur'an those polytheists who were afraid of the jinn, and therefore took refuge in them:

> "Indeed, there were men from among mankind who took shelter with men from the jinn, but they increased them in folly." (72:6)

The commentators of the Noble Qur'an have interpreted the words "increase them in folly" as their being struck with fear and panic. This is because the jinn feel high and mighty when they see humans fearing them and seeking refuge in them. Therefore, the jinn make themselves a greater source of fear and panic so that these humans may increasingly worship and seek refuge in them. Allah has guided the Muslims to seek refuge in Him and in His complete words:

> "And if an evil whisper comes to you from Satan, then seek refuge with Allah. Verily, He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing." (7:200)
>
> "Say: I seek refuge with (Allah) the Lord of

> the day-break." (113:1)
>
> "Say: I seek refuge with (Allah) the Lord of mankind." (114:1)

It is narrated in an authentic *hadith* that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Whoever alights at a place, and says, 'I seek refuge in the Complete Words of Allah and from the evil that He has created,' will not be affected by any harm until his departure from that place."

The evidence is clear that any form of devotion to jinn, the dead etc, is an act of imitation of the pagans and polytheists, and it is the worst type of sin. Therefore, it is a bounden duty on every Muslim to keep away from all such actions, and to advise their brethren against it. Relationships of marriage are not admissible with those people who are known to indulge in polytheistic actions. It is also not permissible to eat from their sacrificial offerings, or to pray behind them until they repent to Allah, and invoke Him alone. Indeed, invocation is the essence of worship. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "*Du'a* (supplication) is worship." And in another version: "*Du'a* is the core and essence of worship." Allah the Almighty says:

> "And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe (worship Allah alone). And

> indeed a slave woman who believes is better than a (free) polytheist, although she may please you. And do not marry (your women to) polytheistic men until they believe. And verily a believing male slave is better than a (free) polytheist, although he may please you. Those (polytheists) invite you to the Fire, but Allah invites to Paradise and to forgiveness, by His permission. And He makes clear His *ayat* (proofs, signs) to mankind so that they may remember." (2:221)

Allah has forbidden Muslim men from marrying women who carry polytheistic beliefs, such as worshipping idols or jinn, unless they revoke these beliefs and sincerely worship Allah alone, as well as accepting the message conveyed by the Prophet (pbuh), and proceeding on his path. Likewise, Allah has forbidden Muslim women from marrying polytheistic men, until they accept Islam. And a believing slave is better than a polytheist, although the polytheist may seem more alluring through eloquence of speech, courage, chivalry etc. This is owing to the fact that the polytheist beckons you towards the Fire through words, actions, conduct and character. On the other hand, the sincere believers, men and women, beckons others towards Paradise through good character, conduct, words and deeds. So, how could the former be equal to the latter? And with regards to hypocrites, Allah the Almighty says:

> "And never (O Muhammad) pray (funeral prayer) over any of them (hypocrites) who has died, nor stand at his grave. Certainly, they disbelieved in Allah and His messenger, and died while they were *fasiqun* (rebellious, disobedient)." (9:84)

In the above verse Allah the Almighty states that one should not offer funeral prayers to hypocrites and disbelievers because of their disbelief in Allah and His messenger. One should also not pray behind known hypocrites, nor put them in a position of leadership; this is due to their untrustworthiness, disbelief and great animosity towards the Muslims; also, they are not of the people who worship Allah. Heresy and polytheism obliterate all actions; may Allah guard us from such actions.

Regarding eating from the slaughter of the disbelievers, Allah says:

> "Do not eat (O believers) of that meat on which Allah's name has not been mentioned (at the time of slaughter), for it is surely *fisq* (sin and disobedience). And certainly the devils do inspire their friends (from mankind) to dispute with you. And if you were to obey

> them, you would indeed be of those who associate (others with Allah)." (6:121)

Allah the Almighty has forbidden the Muslims from eating dead animals and animal sacrificed by polytheists; the sacrifices given by them are in the category of dead animals. Although the name of Allah may have been mentioned, such a mention will have no effect since it is an invocation marred by belief in polytheism. If the polytheist repents to Allah, then his sacrifice may be accepted. Allah has permitted the consumption of food offered by the People of the Book (i.e. Jews and Christians):

> "The food of the People of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) is lawful to you and yours is lawful to them." (5:5)

It is lawful because the People of the Book belong to a heavenly religion and claim to be followers of Moses and Jesus, although this is a false claim. Allah has abrogated their religion and annulled it by sending Muhammad (pbuh) as a messenger to all mankind. However, Allah the Almighty has permitted us to accept the food of the People of the Book and to marry their women. The Divine sanction in this regard is due to certain considerations that have been explained by many scholars. However, such a sanction has not been granted with regard to the disbelievers and polytheists who worship idols, dead people, Prophets and others because the faith they possess is not based on any principle. In fact, all their professions of faith are total falsehoods; therefore the animals slaughtered by such idolaters are considered dead animals and are not lawful for consumption.

Regarding phrases used by people at times of anger, such as, "May the jinn strike you" and "May the jinn fly away with you"; these are phrases of abuse and their use is not permissible, as is the case with all other phrases of abuse. These phrases are not, in essence, connected with polytheism. However, if the person uttering the phrase believes that the jinn have a sway over the affairs of people without the permission of Allah, that would constitute disbelief. Allah the Almighty is the Supreme Possessor and Disposer of everything; it is He who disposes good or causes harm. Nothing exists without Allah's permission, His will and His predestined plan. Allah has ordered the Prophet (pbuh) to convey to the people:

> "Say (O Muhammad), 'I possess no power of benefit or harm to myself except as Allah wills. If I had knowledge of the *Ghaib* (unseen), I should have secured for myself

> and abundance of wealth, and no evil should have touched me. I am but a warner, and a bringer of glad tidings unto people who believe. (7:188)

If the leader and the best of all mankind, our Prophet (pbuh), does not possess any good nor harm for himself, except what Allah wills, how could any other human being do so? There are numerous verses in the Noble Qur'an on this subject. Regarding the consultation of soothsayers, magicians, astrologers and others who try to predict the unknown, it is a reprehensible act. To believe them is even more reprehensible and objectionable and it is a form of blasphemy. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "The prayers of a person who consults a soothsayer about anything will not be accepted for forty days." (Narrated in Sahih Muslim)

It is also narrated on the authority of Mu'awiyah bin Al-Hakam As-Salami that the Prophet (pbuh) prohibited consultation with soothsayers. It is narrated, as transmitted by the compilers of *As-Sunan*, that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "He who believes in what a soothsayer says becomes a disbeliever in what has been revealed to Muhammad (pbuh)."

There are several sayings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in this context. Muslims, therefore, should be on their guard against soothsayers, sorcerers and witchdoctors who claim knowledge of the unseen, and deceive Muslims on the pretext of medical treatment or other excuses. Muslims should beware such people, as our beloved Prophet (pbuh) cautioned against them. Included in this category are claims, made by some people, to have knowledge of the condition of an ill person by some trivial observation, such as smelling the turban of a male patient, or the veil of a woman, and so on. Such people seek only to deceive and confuse the minds of innocent people, so that they will be respected as people who are well-informed in medicine and treatment. These people may dispense some medicine, after which the patient may recover, by the will of Allah, but the patient believes that he/she has recovered due to the medicine. It is also possible that the illness was caused by some jinn who are in the employ of the false doctor, and these jinn provide him with some knowledge. On the basis of this knowledge, the imposter then performs certain rituals of worship to please the jinn, so that they may withdraw from the ill person. However, as is well-known about jinn and those who employ them, they always leave behind certain harmful effects.

It is, therefore, the duty of every Muslim to be on guard against the above. All Muslims should advise one another to abstain from such beliefs and practices, and to rely and depend on Allah in all matters. Keeping this in mind, there is no objection to using permissible treatments to cure illnesses, such as *ruqya* (recitation of Divine verses), and permissible medicines and treatments given by medical doctors on the basis of physical examination, and ascertainment of the physical and mental causes of the illness. The Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Allah has created no disease for which there is no treatment; those who have studied it, know it. And those who have ignored it do not know it."

He also said:

> "Every disease has a medicine, and if the right medicine is chosen for the disease, the ill person will be cure, Allah willing."

And,

> "O servants of Allah, take medicines but do not take medicines that are forbidden."

There are many such sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) on this subject. We pray to Allah the Almighty to reform all Muslims and to cure our minds and bodies from all evils. May He guide us to the right path and protect us from evil temptations, and from obedience to Satan and his friends and protectors. Verily, Allah has supreme power over everything; there is no power or strength except with Allah, the All-Knowing. And may peace and blessing be upon the Prophet of Allah and his family members and companions.

PART C

The Directive Concerning Worship Through Certain Innovations Which are Derived From Polytheistic Beliefs

From 'Abdul 'Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz to dear brother (....) May Allah grant him success in everything good, *Amin.*

May the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you all.

I am in the receipt of you letter regarding certain supplications, which are preformed at specified times of the day or night, by Muslims of your country. These are prayers which Allah has not commanded. Among these prayers are those that have been introduced as innovations, and those that are polytheistic. Sometimes such prayers are directed at the commander of the faithful, 'Ali bin Abi Talib, and others. They recite these prayers in congregations of *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) or in mosques after the *maghrib* prayer, with the belief that such prayers will bring them closer to Allah. Prayers uttered in these gatherings include phrases such as: "O men of Allah, help us with the help of Allah and be of succour to us." Or, "O you leaders of authority, O you masters, please respond to our prayers, O you, who possess all help, please intercede with Allah on behalf of this slave who is pleading to you at the door, seized by the fear of his failing; help us O Prophet of Allah; We do not have anyone else to whom we can plead; it is you through whom our wishes can be fulfilled; you are the best of the people of Allah, like Hamza, the leader of all martyrs; no one other than you can help us; O Prophet of Allah, come to our help." Others may say, "O Allah bless the one you have made as a means for revealing your mighty secrets and your Divine light; he became a true vicegerent and inheritor of all your truth."

You also desired to know, in your letter, about *bid'ah* (innovation) and polytheism. You wanted to know if it would be acceptable to pray behind an *Imam* who makes such invocations. Regarding this, I would like to state the following:

All praise is due to Allah alone, and may peace and blessings be upon the Prophet, the last of all

Prophets, and on the members of his family, his companions and all those who shall, until the Day of Judgment, proceed on the right path shown by him. Verily, Allah the Almighty created mankind and sent messengers in order that He alone may be worshipped. Allah states in the Noble Qur'an:

> "And I (Allah) did not create the jinn and men except that they should worship Me (alone)." (51:56)

To worship means to obey Allah the Almighty and his Prophet (pbuh) by carrying out what has been ordered for us to do, and by abstaining from what has been forbidden. We carry out these actions with faith, humility and sincere devotion to Allah and His Prophet (pbuh). It is stated in the Noble Qur'an:

"And you Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him…" (17:23)

In other words, He has ordained that He alone be worshipped. Allah says in the Noble Qur'an:

> "All praise is (due) to Allah, Lord of the Worlds. The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful; Sovereign of the Day of Recompense. You (alone) do we worship, and You (alone) do we ask for help." (1:2-5)

These verses make it clear that Allah alone is to be worshipped and His help alone is to be sought.

Allah also says:

> "…So worship Allah (alone) being sincere to Him in religion. Surely, the pure religion (i.e. worship and obedience) is for Allah only…" (39:2-3)
>
> "So, invoke Allah, (being) sincere to Him in religion (by worshipping and obeying Him alone), however much the disbelievers may hate it". (40:14)
>
> "And the mosques are for Allah (alone), so do not invoke anyone along with Allah. (72:18)

There are several such verses in the Noble Qur'an' pointing out the necessity and duty to worship Allah alone. Invocation, as you all know, is, in all its forms, a manner of worship. It is therefore not permissible to invoke, seek help or plead for assistance, from anyone except Allah, as stated in the above verses. However, in matters pertaining to daily life, and material things over which every human has control, there is no harm in seeking the help of fellow humans. This is not considered worship. For example, it is quite normal to seek the help of another to ward off some harm that may occur to one's son, servant or dog etc. Or one may ask his colleague help in building his house or repairing his car. In this context, Allah the Almighty says, while narrating the story of Prophet Musa (peace be upon him):

> "...The man of his (own) party asked him for help against his enemy..." (28:15)

The help and aid which one seeks from his fellow humans at times of *jihad* and conflict, is similar to the above mentioned help. On the other hand, seeking help and aid from the dead, jinn, angels, trees, stones, or other things, is an act of major polytheism. It is similar to the practices of the polytheists of the early ages, with their gods such as *Al-Laat* and *Al-'Uzza.* Similarly, it is an act of polytheism to believe that certain human beings possess certain supernatural powers, which belong only to Allah the Almighty. Some believe that such people can help in curing the sick, showing the path of right guidance to those who go astray, or bestowing Paradise and salvation from Hell. The verses and *ahadith*, referred to above, emphasize the need to guide all people to the path of Allah in all matters, and towards sincerity in worshipping Allah alone; for this is the purpose for which humans have been created. Allah the Almighty says:

> "Worship Allah, and join none with Him in worship..." (4:36)
>
> "And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, and worship none but Him

> alone (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him)." (98:5)

And the Prophet (pbuh) said, as narrated by Mu'adh (may Allah be pleased with him):

> "It is Allah's right over the worshippers that they worship only Him and do not associate anyone with Him."

And in another tradition, narrated by Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Whoever dies, while invoking someone as rival to Allah, will be doomed to Hell." (narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari)

When the Prophet (pbuh) sent Mu'adh (may Allah be pleased with him) to Yemen, he said to him:

> "You shall be meeting a people who profess faith in a revealed Book; therefore, your plea to them should be to profess the Statement of Faith: 'There is no god except Allah, and that I (Muhammad) am the messenger of Allah.'" In the narration of Bukhari it is mentioned as "Plead to them until they accept the Oneness of Allah."

It is narrated in the collection of *ahadith*, compiled by Imam Muslim, that, according to a saying narrated by Tariq bin Ashyam Al-Ashja'i, that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Whoever accepts the Oneness of Allah, and disbelieves in whatever is worshipped other than Allah, enjoys the protection of Allah in

> his wealth and blood, and his reward is with Allah."

There are numerous other *ahadith* on this subject. The faith in the Oneness of Allah is the sum and substance of Islam. It is the basic principle, and the most important of all duties. And it is for this purpose that the human and jinn were created. Faith in the Oneness of Allah is grounds on which all the messengers of Allah were sent to teach mankind. We previously quoted several verses affirming this fact, such as:

> "And I (Allah) did not create the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me." (51:56)
>
> "And verily, We have sent among every *Ummah* (community, nation) a messenger (proclaiming): 'Worship Allah (alone) and avoid *Taghut* (false deities)..." (16:36)
>
> "And We sent not before you (O Muhammad) any messenger except that We revealed to him that: 'there is no deity except Me, so worship Me.'" (21:25)

Referring to the Prophets Nuh, Hud, Saleh and Shu'aib, Allah says that they advised their people the following:

> "...O my people! Worship Allah! You have no other god but Him..." (7:59)

This was the message of all the Prophets of Allah. All those who opposed the Prophets confessed that they understood the message of the Prophets, that is to worship Allah alone, and to give up the worship of other gods. The Noble Qur'an mentions, referring to the story of 'Ad, that the people told Prophet Hud (peace be upon him):

> "They said: You have come to us that we should worship Allah alone and forsake that which our forefathers used to worship..." (7:70)

Similarly, when the people of the tribe of Quraysh were called upon to worship Allah only, and to give up the worship of idols, angel and others, they replied:

> "Has he made the gods (all) into One god Verily, this is a curious thing!" (38:5)

And in chapter *As-Saffat* Allah says:

> "Truly, when it was said to them, '*La Ilaha Illa-Allah* (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah),' they puffed themselves up with pride (i.e. denied it). And (they) said: 'Are we going to abandon our gods for the sake of a mad poet?' (37:35, 36)

There are many more verses in the Noble Qur'an, and sayings of the Noble Prophet (pbuh), which expound this concept. May Allah grant us all success in understanding our religion and in educating ourselves regarding the true path of Allah.

As for the invocations and different expressions seeking help, they are various forms of polytheism because they are addressed as worship to other than Allah. The goal of these supplications is to achieve benefit through the dead and departed, whereas Allah alone can grant benefit. In fact, it is a worse form of polytheism compared to the polytheism of early ages, since the people of the early ages indulged in polytheism only in times of peace and luxury; at times of crisis and hardship they worshipped Allah alone because inwardly they knew that Allah alone can bring salvation from hardships. The Noble Qur'an refers to those polytheists saying:

> "And when they embark on a ship, they invoke Allah, making their faith pure for Him only, but when He brings them safely to land, behold, they give a share of their worship to others." (29:65)

And Allah says in another verse:

> "And when adversity touches you at sea, lost are (all) those that you invoke except for Him (Allah). But when he delivers you safely to land, you turn away (from Him). And man is ever ungrateful." (17:67)

If the present-day polytheists were to say, “We do not mean that those whose help we seek can, by themselves, benefit us, or cure our sick, or be of harm to us. We only seek their intercession with Allah for us.” The answer to such a comment should be as follows: Verily the disbelievers of the early period also had the same purpose and desire. They too did not believe that their gods could create or give livelihood or do good or harm. Those disbelievers also claimed that they only sought, through such worship, the intercession and good offices of those whom they worshipped, in order that they may take them nearer to Allah. Allah says in the Qur'an, in the context of the story of Prophet Yunus (peace be upon him):

> “And they worship other than Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say: ‘These are our intercessors with Allah.’ Say: ‘Do you inform Allah of something He does not know in the heavens or on earth? Glorified and Exalted is He high above all that they associate with Him.” (10:18)
>
> “The revelation of this Book (the Qur'an) is from Allah the Almighty, the All-Wise. Verily We have sent down the Book to you (O Muhammad) in truth. So worship Allah

> being sincere to Him in religion. Verily, for
> Allah is the pure religion." (39:1-3)

It is evident from these verses that Allah alone is to be worshipped and such worship should be in all sincerity, because Allah has commanded the Prophet (pbuh) to be sincere in worship. This command applies to all the believers. In the above quoted verse, the word *Ad-Deen*, meaning religion in Arabic, has been interpreted as worship. Worship means obedience to Allah and His Prophet and, as stated earlier, it includes invocation, seeking help, fear, hope, vows and sacrifices, as well as prayer, fasting and other duties as ordained by Allah and His Prophet (pbuh). In following verses, Allah says:

> "...And those who take *auliya'* (protectors
> and helpers) besides Him (saying): 'We
> worship them only that they may bring us
> near to Allah..." (39:3)

In other words, they sought to say that their only purpose was to achieve nearness to Allah. In response to this, Allah says:

> "...Verily, Allah will judge between them
> concerning that wherein they differ. Truly,
> Allah guides not he who is a liar and
> disbeliever." (39:3)

Thus, their claim that their gods take them nearer to Allah has been exposed and proven false, and their worship has been described as blasphemy. The source of this blasphemy and polytheism of the early ages should, therefore, be clear to anyone with even a minimum amount of intelligence. Namely, that they used to take creations other than Allah as intercessors between them and Allah; and they believed that such intercessors could achieve for them their hopes and aspirations and fulfill their needs and ambitions. They believed this without the consent or permission of Allah the Almighty. They likened the power of Allah to the power of a king who has ministers, and therefore petitioned Allah through those "minister" rather than directly. This is the worst form of falsehood because Allah the Almighty has none similar to Him, and He cannot be compared with His own creations. No one intercedes with Him without His permission, and intercession is only granted to the believers in the oneness of Allah. Allah is Omnipotent and Omniscient and He is Most Merciful. He does not fear anyone, and neither can anyone frighten Him, since He has power over all His servants, and He alone dispenses their affairs as He wills. On the contrary, kings and leaders cannot have power over anything, and the do not have knowledge about everything; therefore they need people to assist them in matters which they are unable to achieve or implement on their own. Hence, they are always surrounded by an entourage of minister, advisors, body guards and others. They also need to be informed about those who are in want; this is yet another reason for needing ministers and advisors. On the other hand, Allah the Almighty is above all such needs and all such assistance. He is the Most Just Ruler who is more kind to His people than their mothers. Through Allah's supreme knowledge, wisdom and ability, He assigns everything to its proper place; it is therefore out of bounds to compare Him with His own creations. For this reason, Allah has stated in the Noble Qur'an that He is the Creator and Sustainer; it is He who responds to the call of one who is in distress, and He who relieves all harm. He alone gives life and takes it away; and the power of all actions belongs with Him. The core of the dispute that took place between Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the polytheists was in fact about the sincerity in worshipping Allah alone. As stated in the Noble Qur'an:

> "And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say, 'Allah.'..." (43:87)
>
> "Say: 'Who provides for you from the sky and from the earth? Or who controls hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who disposes (every) affair?' They will say: 'Allah.' Say: 'Will

> you not then fear (Him)?'" (10:31)

Regarding intercession, Allah the Almighty has mentioned, in several places in the Qur'an, the true meaning of intercession. For example:

> "...Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His permission?" (2:225)

Allah will not accept, from His worshippers, blasphemy and heathenism. He will only accept gratitude expressed by the belief in the Oneness of Allah, and obedience to Him. It is stated in the Noble Qur'an:

> "And there are many angels in the heavens, whose intercession will avail nothing except after Allah has given leave for who He wills and pleases." (53:26)
>
> "...And they cannot intercede except for him with whom He (Allah) is pleased.
> And they stand in awe for fear of Him." (21:28)
>
> "If you disbelieve, then verily, Allah is not in need of you. He does not approve of his servants' disbelief. And if you are grateful, He is pleased therewith for you..." (39:7)

It is narrated in the collection of *ahadith* (traditions) compiled by Imam Al-Bukhari, that Abu Huraira said, that when he asked the Prophet (pbuh):

> "Who shall be the happiest people with your

> intercession, O Prophet of Allah?" The Prophet (pbuh) replied, "He who says that there is no god except Allah, and says so with all the sincerity of his heart (or his self)."

It is also narrated, on the authority of Anas, that the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "Every Prophet has a plea which will be fulfilled, and every Prophet hastened to make his plea, while I withheld mine, so that I may intercede for my *ummah* (nation) on the Day of Judgment. And, by the will of Allah, my intercession will include all of my *ummah* who have departed from this world without setting up partners to Allah in worship."

Several verses in the Noble Qur'an and *ahadith* emphasize the fact that worship is a right reserved for Allah alone, and it is forbidden to worship anyone other than Allah, whether they be Prophets or anyone else. These proofs also emphasize that fact that intercession is with Allah the Almighty alone, as stated in the Qur'an:

> "Say: To Allah belongs all intercession..." (39:44)

No one shall deserve intercession except by Allah's permission. And He, the Almighty, will permit intercession only for those who believe in the true Oneness of Allah, as stated earlier. Therefore, the polytheist will not be granted intercession. The Noble Qur'an says:

> "So no intercession will be of any use to them." (74:48)

> "For the *dhalimun* (wrong-doers, polytheists) there will be no friend, nor intercessor who will be obeyed." (40:18)

The expression *dhalimun* in this verse is interpreted as the polytheists. This is supported in another verse:

> "...And it is the disbelievers who are the *dhalimun* (wrong-doers etc.)." (2:254)

> "Verily, joining others in worship with Allah is a great *dhulm* (wrong, injustice) indeed." (31:13)

Let us now turn to your question regarding some people, who utter certain supplications, in mosques and other gatherings. These supplications may include phrases such as "O Lord, grant peace and blessings on the one whom you have ordained to be instrumental in the unfolding of Your Mighty Secrets and in opening the doors to the sublime lights of your mercy, and who has thus become Your vicegerent, and has inherited Your hidden secrets...etc." The answer to this would be as follows: All such utterances are nothing but pedantry and empty talk, against which our beloved Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has warned us. It is narrated in the Imam Muslim's collection of traditions, on the authority of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud, the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "The pedant shall be doomed to destruction." (The Prophet (pbuh) repeated this remark three times.)

Imam Al-Khattabi had defined a pedant as one who delves into problems and issues which are beyond his intellectual abilities, as was indulged by the scholastic theologians. Abus-Sa'adat Ibn Al-Athir has said that the pedants are those who show extravagance in their speech and try to speak too loudly. The Arabic word for this expression, *mutanatti'*, is derived from the word *nat'*, which means the forepart of the palate. Later, the word was used for every extravagance, either in speech, or in action.

Any person, even with minimum intelligence, will notice that the above mentioned phrases in praise of our Prophet (pbuh) are a form of pedantry and affectation, and are forbidden by Allah. In view of these supplications, the correct approach for a Muslim would be to learn the traditional method of sending blessings on the Prophet (pbuh). Imam Al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim have narrated, in their collections, on the authority of Ka'b bin 'Ujrah, that the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) said to him:

> "O Prophet of Allah, we have been ordered

> to send *salat* (prayers) on you. How shall we send *salat* on you?" The Prophet (pbuh) replied: "Say, 'O Lord, send Your prayers on Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You sent Your prayers on Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim; verily, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious. And bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim; verily, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious.'"

It is also narrated, in the collections of Imam Al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim, on the authority of Abi Humaid As-Sa'idi, that some people asked the Prophet (pbuh):

> "How shall we send *salat* (prayers) on you, O Prophet of Allah?" The Prophet (pbuh) replied: "Say: 'O Lord, send Your prayers on Muhammad, and on his wives, and his children as you sent Your prayers on the family of Ibrahim. And bless Muhammad, his wives, and his children as you blessed the family of Ibrahim. Verily, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious.'"

In the collection of Imam Muslim, we find a narration, on the authority of Abi-Mas'ud Al-Ansari, that Basheer bin Sa'd said:

> "O Prophet of Allah, Allah has ordered us to send *salat* on you, so how shall we send *salat* on you? The Prophet (pbuh) remained silent

> for a few moments and then said, "Say: 'O Lord, send prayers on Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as you sent prayers on Ibrahim. And bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You blessed Ibrahim, in the worlds, verily, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious.' This is the prayer taught to you."

All such supplications that are authentically attributed to the Prophet (pbuh) should be the only utterances used by Muslims who seek to pray for the Prophet and ask for Allah's benediction for him. Muslims should abide by these authentic words because the Prophet (pbuh) knows best regarding the words that are to be used for him and his Lord. As for all the innovated and affected words and phrases, they should not be used because they are not what has been commanded of us, as well, their meanings could be interpreted falsely. Not to mention that many of these invented words may be loaded with false connotations, as is the one quoted in your query; such speech could easily be interpreted with incorrect meanings. In addition, the fact is that these words are different from those selected by the Prophet of Allah (pbuh); he has instructed his *ummah* and he is the best informed among all human beings, and the most righteous, as well as the least inclined to affectations. May the best of peace and blessings from our Lord be upon him. I hope that this discussion, supported by adequate proofs, will suffice in explaining the truth of the doctrine of the Oneness of Allah, exposing polytheism and explaining the differences between the early polytheists and those of later ages, in this regard.

Any person who seeks to know the truth should be convinced by the explanation concerning the permissible form of *salat* on the Prophet (pbuh). However, if a person has no desire to know the truth, he can indulge in his own fanciful thoughts. Allah has referred to such people in the Noble Qur'an, saying:

> "But if they do not respond to you, know that they only follow their (own) desires. And who is more astray than one who follows his desire without guidance from Allah? Indeed, Allah does not guide the wrong-doing people." (28:50)

In the above two verses, Allah the Almighty has classified people into two groups relating to their attitude towards Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his mission. One group responds to Allah and His messenger, whereas the other group follows its own lusts. Allah affirms that those who follow their own lusts are deprived of all guidance from Him.

We pray to Allah the Almighty to keep us safe from becoming followers of our own lusts. May Allah make all of us among those who always stay firm on the path of Allah and His messenger; and among those who uphold His divine law, and caution against what it in violation of it, such as innovations and fanciful opinions. Verily, Allah is Magnanimous and Generous. May peace and blessings be upon Allah's slave and messenger, Prophet Muhammad and on his family, his companions and his followers until the Day of Judgment.

❖ THE NECESSITY OF SUNNAH AND CAUTION AGAINST INNOVATION

On Celebrating the Birthday of the Prophet (pbuh)

All Praise is due to Allah, and may peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, who called upon the people to obey Allah, and cautioned against extravagance, innovation and disobedience. May Allah bless him, his companions, and those who follow his footsteps until the Day of Judgment.

In relation to the subject of innovation in religion, and the necessity of adhering to the *sunnah*, this question has been oft-repeated: Is it permissible to celebrate the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) (known as *milad*), as well as the rituals that accompany this celebration? The answer is: It is not permissible to celebrate the birthday of our beloved messenger, or that of anyone else. This is considered an innovation, as the Prophet (pbuh) himself never celebrated his birthday, nor commanded others to do so for himself, or for anyone who passed away before him, or for any of his family members. The rightly-guided caliphs, the companions and the successors who followed them, never celebrated this event, nor did any of the Muslim scholars in the centuries that followed. These great people knew the Prophet (pbuh) best, they loved him more, and they followed the *shari'ah* better than those who came after them. If celebrating the Prophet's birthday was a good deed, they would have done it. As Muslims, we are commanded to follow the path that has been shown to us, and we are forbidden from innovating and adding to it in any way. This is due to the perfection of Islam, and the sufficiency of what Allah and His Messenger have given us. It is related to the Prophet (pbuh) that he said:

> "He who innovates something in this matter of ours that is not of it, will have it rejected." (narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)
>
> Muslim reported it as follows: "Whoever does an act which is not in agreement with our matter, will have it rejected."

In another tradition the Prophet (pbuh) said:

> "You must keep to my *sunnah* and the *sunnah* of the rightly-guided caliphs; cling to it firmly. Beware of newly invented matters, for every new matter is an innovation and every innovation is misleading."

Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) used to say in every Friday Khutbah:

> "The best discourse is the Book of Allah, and

> the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, and the worst matter is that of innovation, and every innovation is misleading."

Thus, these traditions contain a strong caution against innovations, as well as warning that every innovation is a deviation from the straight path. The Prophet (pbuh) warned the people of the gravity of these innovations and of their harmful consequences. There are many more traditions indicating the same meaning. Allah the Most High says:

> "...And whatever the Messenger (i.e. Muhammad) gives you, take it, and whatever he forbids for you, abstain (from it)." (59:7)
>
> "...And let those who oppose the Messenger's (i.e. Muhammad's) commandments beware, lest *fitnah* (trial, afflictions) befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them." (24:63)
>
> "Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example to follow, for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day, and who remembers Allah often." (33:21)
>
> "And the first forerunners in the faith, among the *muhajirun* (those who migrated from Makkah to Madinah) and the *ansar* (the

> citizens of Madinah who aided the *muhajirun*), and those who followed them with good conduct, Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him. And He has prepared for them gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the supreme success. (9:100)
>
> "...This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion..." (5:3)

This last verse decisively indicates that Allah the Almighty has made the religion complete, and showered His blessings on the *ummah* of Muhammad (pbuh). Our beloved Prophet (pbuh) passed away only after he had imparted Allah's complete message. He also stressed that all things that are invented by people, and then attributed to Islam, are innovations, and are to be rejected, even if their inventors did so in good faith. It is established that the companions and righteous successors also warned the people against innovations, as they add to Islam, and they legislate what is not permitted by Allah. Such is the actions of other groups, such as the Jews and Christians, who innovated and added to their religion that which was not permitted by Allah.

Moreover, to accept an innovation in Islam is to admit that Islam is incomplete and imperfect. Such a belief is not only an evil, but it contradicts the verse mentioned previously (5:3), and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

To celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (pbuh) means that the religion is not complete, and perfected by Allah the Almighty, for the *ummah*. This would also imply that the Messenger did not impart to the people what is necessary regarding religious duties. Undoubtedly, this is a great danger and is tantamount to criticizing Allah the Almighty and His messenger, as Allah has already perfected the religion, and the Prophet (pbuh) has already conveyed the message in its totality. According to an authentic *hadith* which was reported on the authority of Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-'Aas, Allah's messenger said:

> "Allah the Almighty did not send a Prophet except that he obliged him to lead his people to the best way which is known to him, and warn them against the worst which is know to him."
>
> (Narrated by Muslim)

It is well known that our beloved Prophet (pbuh) is the best of all Prophets, and the last and most perfect of them, regarding the way in which he conveyed the message and advised his people. Had the celebration of his birthday been a religious act chosen by Allah, the Prophet would have explained it, or celebrated it, or ordered his companions to celebrate it. Thus, it is clear that this celebration is not a part of Islam, on the contrary, it is an innovation, against which the Prophet (pbuh) has warned us, as mentioned earlier. Scholars have not only rejected the celebration, but have warned against it in view of the evidence above.

According to the rule of Islamic *shariah*, all matters regarding legalization or prohibition, and all disputes among the people, should be referred to the Book of Allah and the *sunnah* of His messenger. This principle is in line with Allah's saying:

> "O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger (i.e. Muhammad (pbuh)), and those of you who are in authority amongst you. And if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best (way) and best in result."
>
> "And in anything over which you disagree, its ruling is (to be referred) to Allah."
> (4:59)

Referring this issue, of innovations, back to the

Book of Allah, we find that we are commanded to follow the orders of Allah's messenger, and avoid his prohibitions. Furthermore, we see that Allah has already perfected the religion for the people. In light of this, celebrating the birthday of the Prophet cannot be part of the teachings that Allah has asked us to adhere to. Now referring the issue to the *sunnah* of the Prophet (pbuh), we also find that there is no grounds for this celebration, rather it resembles the innovations practiced by the Jews and Christians in their celebrations. With these proofs in mind, anyone searching for the truth, can see with clarity, that celebrating any birthday has nothing to do with Islam. In addition, it is an innovation, which Allah and His messenger have emphatically warned us about. A wise person must also not be deceived by seeing a large number of people practicing such a thing, because truth is known by evidence, and not by the acts of a great number of people. Allah says in the Qur'an:

> "And they say, 'None shall enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian.' That is (merely) their wishful thinking. Say (O Muhammad), "Produce you proof if you are truthful.'" (2:111)
>
> "And if you obey most of those on earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah.

> They follow nothing but conjectures, and
> they are not but falsifying." (6:116)

As a side note, many of these types of innovatory celebrations are also intertwined with other sins, such as mixed gatherings, songs accompanied by musical instruments, and even consumption of alcohol and narcotics. Often they involve *shirk* through showing exaggerated praise to Allah's Messenger, and other saints. Or, they go even further by including prayers to the Prophet, invoking his help, or believing that he knows what is hidden. It is authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) stated the following two *ahadith*:

> "Beware of extravagance in religion. It has caused those before you to perish."
>
> "Do not lavish praise on me as the Christians did with the Son of Maryam. I am just a slave. So simply say, 'The slave of Allah and His messenger.'" (Bukhari)

It is curious to note that many people participate actively in such celebrations, and firmly defend them, while they sit back from performing the obligatory forms of worship, such as daily and Friday prayers. It is even more astonishing to note that some people believe that Allah's Messenger is present at such birthday celebrations. Consequently, they stand up to greet and welcome him. This is not only a sheer lie, but it is the worst form of ignorance, as Allah's messenger will not be resurrected before the Day of Resurrection; until then his soul will rest at the highest of the high, with his Lord in an exalted place. We ask Allah's protection from all ignorance. Allah says in the Qur'an:

> "Then, indeed, after that you will die. Then (again), indeed, you will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection." (23:15, 16)

The Prophet (pbuh) himself is quoted as saying:

> "I am the first one to rise from the grave on the Resurrection Day, and I will be the first intercessor, and the first one whose intercession is accepted."

Such evidence is solid proof that the dead will not come out of their graves until the Day of Resurrection. All the scholars of Islam agree on this. It is important that Muslims be aware of such knowledge so as not to be misled by innovations and superstitions created by ignorant people, and with no authority from Allah.

As for offering blessings and greetings to the Prophet (pbuh), this is among the most preferred and virtuous of deeds. This is in accordance with the saying of Allah:

> "Indeed, Allah, and His angels, confer

> blessings upon the Prophet. O you who believe! (Ask Allah to confer) blessings upon him, and ask (Allah to grant him) peace." (33:56)

The Prophet (pbuh) also said:

> "Whoever sends blessings upon me one time, Allah sends blessings upon him ten times."

These greetings are desirable at all times of the day, and especially at the end of each prayer. It is considered an obligatory part of the prayer itself (at the end of the last *tashahhud*), by most of the scholars. It is strongly recommended on many other occasions, such as at the end of the *adhan*, at the mention of the name of the Prophet (pbuh), and during the day of Friday, and the night preceding it.

May Allah help us all to understand His religion, and to hold firm to it, and to adhere to the *sunnah* of our beloved Prophet (pbuh), and to keep away from all innovations. Indeed, Allah is Generous and Kind

May Allah shower His blessings and mercy upon our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), his family, and his companions.

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